

# IN A RAID WITH THE FIFTH MICHIGAN CAVALRY

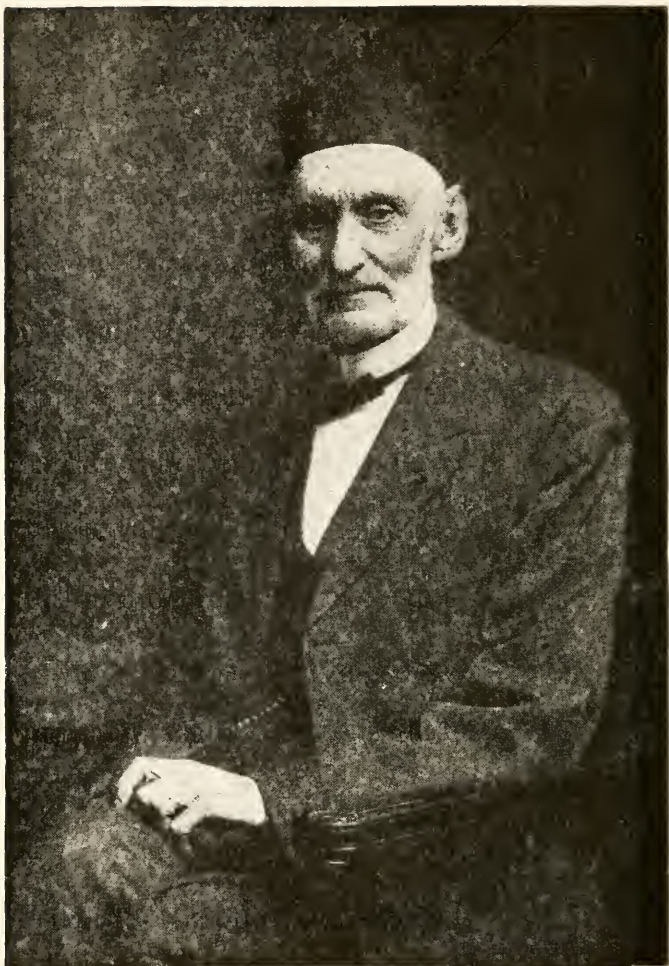
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*By* SAMUEL HARRIS

Late 1st Lieutenant Co. A 5th Mich. Cavalry

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## **SAMUEL HARRIS**

**Late First Lieutenant Company A, Fifth Michigan Cavalry  
Born September 15th, 1836**

## IN A RAID WITH THE FIFTH MICHIGAN CAVALRY.

In the spring of 1863 to clear the country east of the Blue Ridge Mountains as far south as Ashby's Cap of Rebels.

The first day we marched about fifty miles and camped near a small village called Upperville. The next morning we passed through this village and about ten miles beyond, before the road began the ascent to the gap. Here we halted a few moments when I was ordered to take about fifty men of my company and capture the gap. Away we went up the hill. Soon shots were fired at us from the hills on both sides, but their shots all went over us. In the gap was about a dozen houses. One shot came from a house on our left and went through the left hand of Lieutenant

George N. Dutchers who was riding close to my side. I halted the column and hollered as loud as I could, "If another shot comes from a house for the boys to turn and fire into the house nearest them." Not another shot was fired out of the house.

Soon after this, word was passed up from the rear to look back. There was a man riding as fast as he could and motioning me to halt. As we came up he gave me an order to come back and join the regiment. When I got back I found that Col. Freeman Norvall was drunk and that the staff officers had put him in an ambulance. To me it had every appearance that he had been invited to take a drink from a bottle that had been badly drugged on purpose of getting a charge against him. (He resigned when he got back to camp.)

We countermarched back towards our old camp. After marching about five miles the column halted.

An orderly came back to me with orders to come to the front with my company. I gave orders to march and we started on the run coming up to Lt. Col. Gould. I asked what orders. He answered, "Rebels ahead, go for them." We dashed on ahead and soon came to a full company standing in the road with their captain in command which looked very singular to me.

I found out that the captain that stood at the top of the hill when he saw a few Rebs ahead of him had halted and sent word back to Colonel Gould, "Rebels ahead, what shall I do?" He was told to resign or he would be dismissed for cowardice.

After passing this company I came to the top of a slight decline. At the bottom ran quite a stream from the mountain and on the other side was a road leading towards the hills. I saw a guard of fifteen or twenty rebs, evidently guarding a wagon.

Away we went after them. Some of the guards rode off into the woods and escaped. The wagon and about half a dozen of the guards kept on to a big plantation about a mile and a half.

I sent some of my men into a big barn and took several to a big straw stack and told them to ride around the stack and run their sabers into it up to the hilt. Soon a man hollered out, "Don't run your saber in anymore, I'll come out." Soon one of the men called out that he had struck something hard. Several jumped off their horses and dug out a big chest well bound around with iron. Some of our men carried an axe with them and soon broke the cover. The chest was filled with Confederate money, said to be three millions of dollars. I had the boys pass me up a hand full and called all of the boys together and gave them each a lot.

I went back to the regiment. Riding up to the Colonel I presented the Reb quartermaster and three

or four other prisoners and several thousand dollars of Rebel money. He congratulated me and my success.

We continued the march for some miles to a plantation owned by General Asa Rogers who with his family had spent several summers with my mother's family in Vermont. I went to the Colonel and told him of the Rogers and asked him to place a guard over the house and all private property. I slept on a pile of hay in a barn. In the morning I went to the house and told the General who I was, and that his house and all his private property had been guarded all night.

We were soon on the march for our old camp. About noon there came up a very bad snow storm. We continued on for about five miles. Beyond the Fairfax court house where we camped for the night. Soon two sutlers came out of a camp near our lines

and stopped near my company. Soon a Corporal said they were overcharging the boys. He said if they don't stop it, the boys will go for them. I told him to be careful. Soon I heard a crash and loud hollering. Some of the boys said that someone had tipped over their wagon and spilled all their pies and cakes. Pretty soon there were no pies or cakes to be found. Soon a big fat Major who was always brave when there were no Reb bullets flying about, came to where I was lying and said he believed I had set my men on the sutlers. He would prefer charges against me. I told him to do his best. Soon the storm blew over. I felt my blanket lifted up. Not a word was said but I knew something was left there. I felt and found a pie and several cakes. Maybe you think I didn't eat them, for I was hungry.

When we got back to camp I never heard anything about charges.